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ABSTRACT

This profile of the English language teaching situation in Norway discusses the role of English in the community and within the educational system. The discussion of English in elementary and secondary education covers compulsory education, the various curricula at the secondary level, examinations at all levels, and the aims and goals of the curriculum in general. English instruction in colleges of education and at universities is also dealt with, as well as the English teaching staff, in-service training, associations of teachers of English, teaching materials used, adult education, and British and American support for the teaching of English. An overview of current research on English language teaching and a bibliography conclude the profile. (CLK)

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ENGLISH TEACHING INFORMATION CENTRE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE

COUNTRY: NORWAY

May 1977

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE - NORWAY

1. The role of English

1.1 Norway is a country of 4 million people with a highly-developed democratic and centralised state education system, an outline of which will be found in our Educational Profile for Norway. The only other peoples with whom communication is possible through Norwegian are the Swedes, Danes and Icelanders, and since the end of World War 2 English has been recognised as the first foreign language. As the country relies heavily on its invisible and visible exports, English is as important in shipping, insurance and banking as it is in industry and commerce in general; and international exchanges in technology and science, in the humanities and in diplomacy are largely conducted in English. Internally, most Norwegians are exposed to a great deal of English through TV, radio and films; many (even popular) books are not available in translation; and non-Nordic tourists, even the French and Germans, accept English as the lingua franca, while Norwegians themselves expect to use it when they travel outside Scandinavia. English is thus important both to the country and to the individual, and people of all ages are motivated to learn it. Almost everyone understands some English, and very many Norwegians speak it fluently.

1.2 English is not formally recognised as a medium of instruction, but non-Scandinavians lecture and teach in it at university level, and in some disciplines (eg medicine, engineering, economics and the social sciences) many of the textbooks are British or American. English is not a second language, despite the ease with which some Norwegians converse in it with each other at international conferences or in the presence of non-Norwegians; for historical reasons Norwegians are very conscious of and devoted to their own languages. But in some narrow fields in which it has been the major language of development (the oil industry, telecommunications, air travel etc.) English could well become a second language.

2. English within the Educational System (Schools)

2.1 Compulsory Education

Compulsory education in the Basic School (grunnskolen) lasts for nine years, from 7+ to 16, and is divided between the junior stage (barnetrinnet) (7-13) and the youth stage (ungdomstrinnet) (13-16). Schools have a 5-day 30-period week, classes do not exceed 30, there is no streaming, and policy is to absorb handicapped children as far as possible into ordinary classes.

2.2 English in the Compulsory School

English is now usually started in the 4th class (ie at age 11), though some schools introduce songs and games etc in English in the 3rd class. The number of periods is as shown below (though in the 4th and 5th classes some schools have 4 ½-lessons):

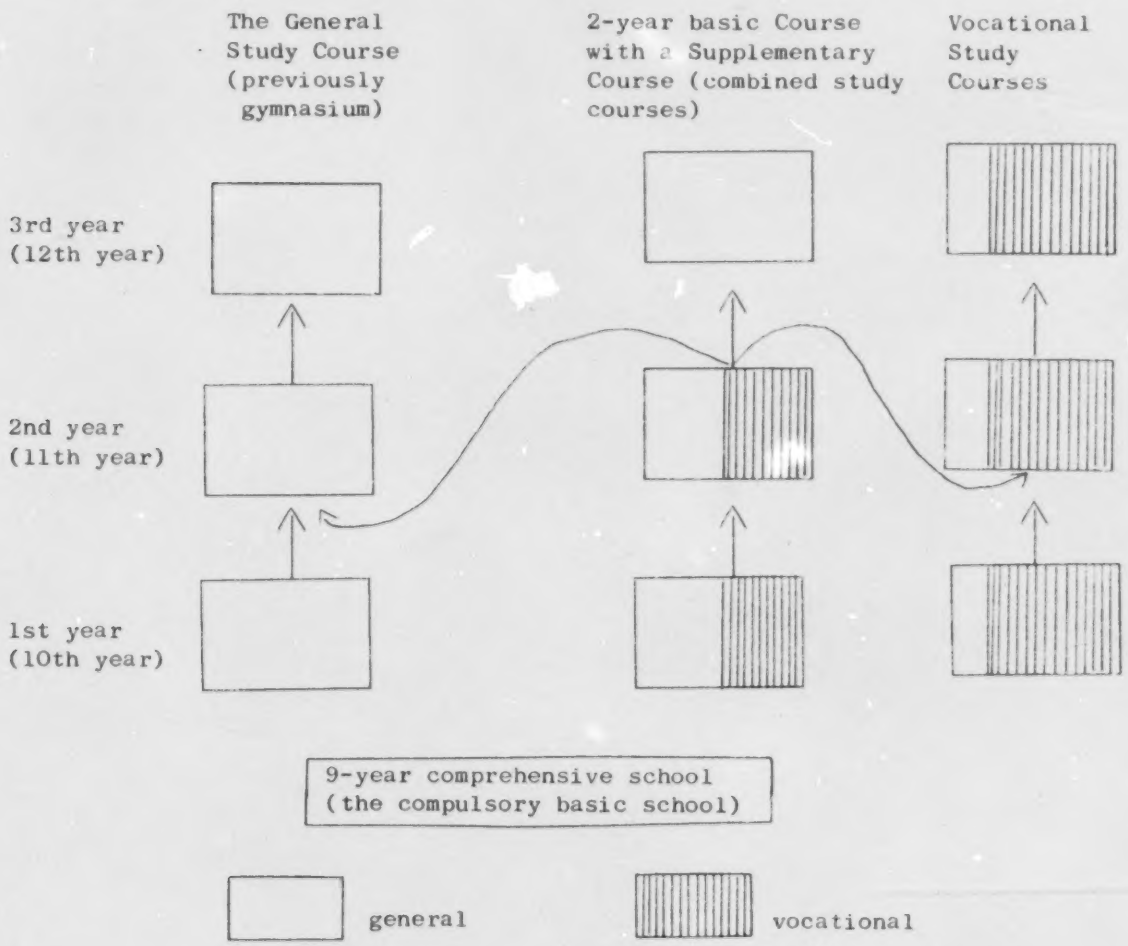
Class	4	5	6	7	8	9
No. of English lessons:	2	2	3	3	3	3

2.3 The Upper Secondary School

Higher secondary education is now undergoing sweeping reforms: previously

existing types of school (the 3-year gymnasium, with its various "sides" or "lines", of which the modern languages and the science "lines" are the most important; the vocational schools; the commercial schools and colleges; and some of the technical schools, are to be brought together into the "videregående skole" (upper secondary school), which will offer two and three-year courses to all who desire them. The organisation will be flexible, so that pupils should have some possibility for movement from one course to another, and need not take their 3-year entitlement either immediately after leaving the youth school at 16/17 or in 3 consecutive school-years. One aim in this is further democratisation of the school system, another is to reduce rigidity. The new structure is illustrated in the diagram below. It will be some years before this is fully effective, and meanwhile there will be a variety of different patterns. The part played by English in some of these is given in 2.4.

Diagram showing the New School Structure


The General Study Course (previously gymnasium)
2-year basic Course with a Supplementary Course (combined study courses)
Vocational Study Courses
3rd year (12th year)
2nd year (11th year)
1st year (10th year)
9-year comprehensive school (the compulsory basic school)
general
vocational

The pupils themselves decide for how many years they want to stay in the upper secondary school (1, 2, 3 or in some cases 4). When finishing a school year they have to decide whether they want to pursue their studies or go to work. The only exception is the two-year basic course. The pupils who have chosen this course, must pursue their studies for two years in order to get competence for work or for further studies in the upper secondary school.

2.4 English in the Upper Secondary School

2.4.1 The gymnasium (general study course) Modern Languages Line:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	8 lessons per week
3rd class	7 lessons per week

2.4.2 The gymnasium (general study course) Commercial Line:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	3 lessons per week
3rd class	5 lessons per week

2.4.3 The gymnasium (general study course) Natural Science, Latin Lines etc:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	4 lessons per week
3rd class	0 lessons per week

2.4.4 The new 2-year basic course:

1st class	4 lessons per week
2nd class	3 lessons per week

2.4.5 This new 2-year basic course will be followed by a 3rd-year supplementary course in which 16-17 periods per week will be devoted to "study courses and electives". Pupils taking the modern languages course in this 3rd year will probably have 6-8 lessons of English per week, though the figure may vary according to the particular combination of subjects chosen.

2.4.6 As an alternative to the 2-year general study course followed by a 3rd year supplementary course, pupils may take a 3-year vocational study course in eg aesthetic subjects, trade and office work, handicraft and industry, home economics, agricultural subjects, or practical social subjects. The part that English will play in these will vary, and has not yet been finally determined; it may appear as part of a study course, or as an elective or optional subject.

2.5 Examinations

The Norwegian school system has traditionally been dominated by examination requirements. Parliament and the Ministry of Education now wish, for social and pedagogic reasons, to reduce and perhaps ultimately eliminate official examinations within the schools, but have met considerable opposition from parents, teachers, employers and the pupils themselves.

2.5.1 The Youth School (Ungdomsskolen)

At present pupils leaving the youth school may be required to undergo written examinations in 4 major subjects (eg Norwegian "bokmål" or "nynorsk", English, Mathematics) but in practice they will be examined in only two of these, the subjects chosen varying from county to county from year to year. Each pupil receives a leaving certificate showing his results in the subjects

in which he has been examined, but also his "standpoint" mark in each subject, awarded by his teachers.

2.5.2 The Upper Secondary School (General Study Course)

The 3-year course (previously the gymnasium) terminates in Examen Artium, which can be equated roughly with the present A-level examination in England, and which serves as an entrance qualification to the universities and to other forms of higher education. (But some 10% of those beginning university-level studies in 1976 had some entrance qualification other than Examen Artium.) Candidates take five 4 or 5 hour written papers and an oral test in their main subjects, and in these and their other subjects are given "oral" marks which may be based on oral examination but generally represent a "standpoint" mark awarded by the subject teacher. Pupils in the modern languages "line" take their English examination at the end of their third year, those in other "lines" at the end of the second year. Examen Artium in its present form is to be phased out, and will be held for the last time in 1981. What will take its place has not yet been decided.

2.5.3 English examinations in the youth school

Various types of examination have been used in recent years in the avgangsprøve i engelsk at the conclusion of the 9-year compulsory school, including some testing aural comprehension by answering questions about a tape-recorded passage. The written examination used in 1976 consisted of 7 sections: answers (either in English or in Norwegian) to questions on a text; completion of a conversation (2); synonyms; completion of sentences; a narrative based on a series of pictures; and a letter. All seven sections were related to a single narrative theme.

2.5.4 English examinations in the general study course (1)

The 4-hour written examination in the science, natural science and latin "lines" consists of questions on the language and content of a 1-page unseen text followed by a free composition; the oral consists of reading and discussion of an unseen text and discussion of a text taken from the prescribed reading.

2.5.5 English examinations in the general study course (2)

The 5-hour written examination in the modern language "line" consists of:-

a. for those following a curriculum based on set passages from a reader of literary and socio-historical texts: an essay on a set topic;

b. for those following a rather freer curriculum, a choice between:-

1. an essay based on set reading;
2. an essay about some contemporary problem;
3. an essay based on a previously unseen text;
4. an essay based on some literary works already read.

2.6 Content and aims: Language and Literature

In accordance with the tenor of the Education Acts and on the advice of its specialist councils, the Ministry of Education issues general and

detailed instructions regarding syllabuses, curricula, and teaching methods to be applied throughout the country at different levels.

2.6.1 The 9-year compulsory school (the basic school)

The aim of English teaching is: to give pupils a practical language competence enabling them to increase their range of contacts in speech and in writing; to lay a foundation for further study of English; and to motivate the pupils to develop their skills and active interest in English. Increasing emphasis is laid on the acquisition and use of oral skills; the structures to be taught in each year are identified; and a basic vocabulary of some 2000 words has been tentatively issued. The teaching material is intended to give pupils some knowledge of conditions in Britain and the USA, both past and contemporary, and some concept of English as an international language. In practice, in the initial stages, content is subordinated to structure and vocabulary, but some picture emerges of life in Britain today. At the "youth" stage (7th-9th classes) more information is provided about contemporary Britain and - to a lesser extent - the USA, and a little historical background may appear. Literature as a separate subject has no place, but some modern texts may be chosen (though perhaps simplified) partly for their literary value.

2.6.2 The Upper Secondary School: Aims

The transition from the compulsory school to the traditional gymnasium has been a difficult one, in English as in other subjects. Text books have been markedly more advanced, more application has been expected, and teaching methods have been more academic. This is changing, and will change more as the new upper secondary school comes into being and more flexible and less academic courses are worked out. Meanwhile, the aims of English teaching at this level are broadly defined thus:-

a. to develop the pupils' ability to understand spoken and written English;

b. to develop their proficiency in speaking and writing English;

c. to give them a knowledge of cultural and social life in the English-speaking world, and to contribute to their own development.

2.6.3 The Upper Secondary School

The traditional textbooks in the gymnasium have been 2/3 volume anthologies of selections from English and American literature (prose and verse), history and social writing, of which pupils have been expected to read x pages intensively and y pages extensively. The books for the English "line" have been supplemented by a Shakespeare play (Macbeth, or, more usually The Merchant) and by handbooks on institutions and "background" and on literary history. The books for the commerce and science "lines" have contained a higher proportion of C20 material and more passages concerned with trade and industry or with science engineering and technology. In the English "line" the main emphasis is on socio- or historical topics (Empire and

Commonwealth, the Welfare State, US democracy etc.) but English and American literature are fairly well represented. Something - but not enough - is done to pull the two disciplines together. The proportion of schools following this rather old-fashioned syllabus (known as Alternative A) is steadily declining.

A growing number of schools, in preparing pupils for Examen Artium in the English or modern languages line, now use Alternative B. This combines more modern text-books with supplementary material (contemporary documents such as newspapers and magazines) and is intended to provide more stimulating opportunities for classroom discussion. Literature as such is not as well represented as in Alternative A, as content is regarded as more important.

It is too early yet to speak with much confidence about the content of English teaching in the new uppe secondary school as a whole, but it will probably be based on the approach exemplified in Alternative B - a description of contemporary life and problems selected to appeal to the young and stimulate oral discussion, supplemented by more solid material catering for the particular interests (literature, science and technology, commerce etc.) of special groups.

2.7 English in the School system: some final comments

Within the state schools (and there are no others of real significance), syllabuses, the examination system and the availability of textbooks (core course material) are all centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education and its specialist executive and advisory Councils; but within these limits teachers are encouraged to use their own imaginations and initiatives. There is no Inspectorate comparable with that in Britain; but there is a network of local teachers centres and pedagogic- and subject-advisers, who are at present primarily occupied with problems of the nine-year basic school.

The Ministry has two ELT qualified native-speaker advisers in English, recruited and subsidised by the British Council, who co-operate with and are attached to the advisory Councils, their functions may be summarised as:-

a. to visit schools, to teach, assist and advise teachers, and make a contribution to the teaching situation;

b. to organise and conduct short intensive in-service courses for teachers of English under the aegis of local authorities;

c. to cooperate with the Councils in the approval of text-books, the production of taped and printed material, and the construction of tests and examination papers.

3. English within the Educational System (Colleges of Education)

3.1 The Colleges of Education

There are 19 general Colleges of Education (previously called lærerskoler, and now known as pedagogiskehøgskoler) with a total enrolment in 1976 of 5200, training teachers for the 9-year compulsory school. They originally offered a 4-year course based on the old realskole-eksamen (roughly equivalent to O-levels) and a 2-year course based on examen artium;

some of the colleges providing the 2-year course offered a special option in English (7/8 lessons per week) at the expense of some other subjects. But the pattern of training in the Colleges has been undergoing alteration in recent years with the raising of the minimum school-leaving age to 16 and with developments in the basic school. The 4-year course is being phased out, and will very shortly disappear entirely; the English option has vanished from the 2-year course. The intention is that all teachers should have a three-year course of study based on examen artium or its equivalent. Some Colleges provide a basic general two-year course, and their students move on elsewhere for a third year of specialist study; others provide both the basic two-year course and some specialisation in a third year; others build the specialist studies into an integrated three-year course. The courses are normally expressed in terms of a credit system:

a 1-year course is worth 20 points

a ½-year course is worth 10 points

a 3-month course is worth 4 points

3.2 English in the Colleges of Education - types of courses

English is therefore now available:

a. as a special full-time 1-year course (currently at 8 colleges);

b. as a ½-year course, either taken as a block or spread over a year in conjunction with some other specialisation (currently at 8 colleges);

c. as a 3-month course, normally spread over a longer period and taken in conjunction with other special subjects.

Originally the specialist courses in English, as in other subjects, were intended partly as in-service training for practising teachers wishing to extend their teaching range. Increasingly they now form part of initial training. In 1976 250 students were taking a 1-year course in English, 165 a ½-year course.

3.3 English in the Colleges of Education - course content

Within limits, the colleges construct their own courses and set and moderate their own examinations; they are gradually ceasing to be over-influenced by university models. They have become less "seminarist" in recent years, and more flexible in time-tabling and teaching methods. They still use the lecture, and large classes, but allow far more time for group work and individual projects than formerly. There is quite a bit of variety, but a typical 1-year or ½-year course will contain the following elements:

the methodology of teaching English to 10-16 year olds;

use of textbooks, preparation of material, use of group methods;

grammar and structures;

oral practice (pronunciation, stress, intonation, acquisition of oral fluency);

background studies (British and US);

literature (intensive studies of fairly recent British and US novels, plays, verse);

periods of teaching practice (organised in different ways).

3.4 The Newcastle Course

Comparable to the 1-year courses is the course which the Ministry of Education runs each year in Newcastle, in collaboration with the University there, intended for some 30 practising teachers. It is taught mainly by British staff, though there is a Norwegian "tutor", who is normally appointed for one year at a time.

4. English within the Educational System (the Universities etc)

Traditionally the Colleges of Education have trained teachers for the junior stages (now up to 16), while the Universities have prepared teachers for the gymnasia (now the upper-secondary schools). Although the majority of university arts graduates, and a large number of science graduates, have always entered the teaching profession, university faculties have hardly taken this into account in framing their courses and examination requirements which have been conceived in traditional academic terms. This situation is now changing somewhat - partly because it is government policy to work towards an integrated teaching profession by recognising College of Education qualifications as elements in a university degree (See 5. The Teaching Cadre.)

4.1 The Universities

The typical arts degree consists of 3 subjects (eg Norwegian, English, history; or German, English, and education), the subjects being studied and the examinations taken consecutively and not concurrently, and the period of study occupying a total of 4-5½ years. In order to be formally qualified to teach, graduates then attend a 6-month course in education known as the pedagogisk seminar, which includes a short course in methods. (There is also a shorter summer course which provides the same formal qualification.)

4.2 English in the Universities: courses and examinations

All four Norwegian universities (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø) provide courses in English. The examinations are held at 3 levels:-

grunnfag (subsidiary) - taken after a 1-year course;

mellomfag (minor) - taken after a 1½-year course, or a 1/2-year course after grunnfag;

hovedfag (major) - taken after 2 years of study beyond mellomfag.

4.3 English in the Universities: content

The two main components of courses at grunnfag and mellomfag level have traditionally been language and literature, the former defined as language history and philology, the latter mainly the history of literature. Although these academic traditions persist, the definitions have been expanded and up-dated. Language now includes some linguistics, phonetics (= oral work), and grammar; and it is now possible to take engelsk mellomfag without having read much literature written before 1800. At hovedfag level (which is partly by written and oral examination and partly thesis) a high degree of specialisation, whether in language or in literature, is expected. Background (for lack of a better word) is still the Cinderella of the disciplines, despite its obvious relevance to school teaching, chiefly because it is interpreted as lacking the intellectual ballast of language or literature.

4.4 The Universities: English outside the faculties of English

In other subjects (eg medicine, engineering, pure science, technology, economics and sociology) many of the prescribed or recommended texts are British or American, and there may be expatriate staff lecturing in English. But the Faculties of English are not expected to act as service departments by providing instruction for students of these subjects, either in general English or in English for Special Purposes. Nor do the other faculties or departments themselves recognise any responsibility for this. (One exception is the Norwegian Institute of Technology at Trondheim (Norges Tekniske Høgskole) where there is a Lectureship in technical English, attached to the office of the Director of Studies.) To the extent that the need for ESP instruction has not been recognised, one may say that it barely exists.

4.5 The Regional Colleges (Distriktshøgskoler)

Six of these have been set up since 1968/69, and at least two others are planned. They take some pressure off the universities by providing some grunnfag or equivalent courses, but their prime aim is to provide students with a geographically accessible solid vocational training, desirably linked to local needs or industries. Three of them (Rogaland DHS, Stavanger; Agder DHS, Kristiansand; and Telemark DHS, Bø) provide 1-year courses in English; these are growing away from their initial dependence on university models, and experimenting rather more - Agder, for example, has a strong background course; Rogaland cooperates closely with the Stavanger College of Education. And Agder has a course for translators, English and French.

5. The Teaching Cadre

The two means of entry to the teaching profession (the Colleges of Education, providing professional courses for work in the basic school, and the Universities, supplying graduates equipped with an additional qualification corresponding roughly to the PGCE) have been described above (3.1 - 3.3 and 4. - 4.3). The two streams are now mingling, in that a College of Education qualification can be recognised as one element in a university degree, with the result that a growing number of teachers have had their education both at College of Education and at a University, and perhaps also at a Regional College. This in its turn reflects the need for staff who can combine general teaching of younger pupils with special-subject teaching at intermediate or higher levels. This may contribute to a unified profession, and perhaps ultimately help to bridge the gaps between the junior stage and the youth stage and the basic school and the upper secondary school. There are still some unqualified teachers in service (mainly young people acquiring experience which will help them to get places in Colleges of Education, and mainly teaching in small schools in the North), but the supply of teachers has increased considerably in the last decade, and there is now an over-production. Teacher unemployment is much less severe here than in Britain at present, but the retirement age is high (67, 68 or even 70), and the retirement rate over the next few years is officially estimated to be low. Teaching is still well regarded as a profession (though teachers are held in less esteem than was the case say even a decade ago) and salary scales for teachers, advisers, and educational administrators are adequate to provide a comfortable living standard. All in all, there are at least as many women teachers as men (drawing equal pay, of course), and in many married couples both partners are teachers. At the same time, many teachers are dissatisfied, not with pay or status or material working conditions, but because of the difficulties of implementing the teaching programmes laid down by legislation and by the Ministry, and because of the problems of teacher/pupil relations.

5.1 Teachers of English

Norway is, then, producing enough school teachers of English; this is the major reason that our scheme for supplying British Council recruited teachers for the Basic School through the Folk University's English Secretariat is now running down; it may be that they will be needed at a higher level as the new upper secondary school comes into full swing, but this is uncertain. There are thus very few non-Norwegian teachers of English in the schools. Expatriate teaching staff are found in the Colleges of Education and in the English departments of the universities and regional colleges; but there are no quotas, or posts specially reserved for them, and they have obtained their jobs in equal competition with Norwegian candidates.

5.2 In-service training etc.

Educational legislation now makes provision for teachers in the basic school to spend one week of the school year on short courses arranged locally; those in English are concerned mainly with integration of work, production of materials, methods of stimulating pupils activity, etc. Teachers in the upper secondary school are not so fortunate at present, but local courses are sometimes arranged to correspond with examinations etc.

Statens læ erkurs (the Courses Department of the Ministry of Education), Forsøksrådet for Skoleverket (the National Council for Innovation in Education), the main teachers' associations (Norsk Lektorlag and Norsk Laererlag), and the Pedagogiske Sentrer (Teachers' Centres) in the large towns also run courses both during the school year and in the vacations; those to do with English tend to be concerned with methods or materials rather than with improving language competence.

In addition, of course, large numbers of teachers find their way to Britain, chiefly during the summer, to attend British Council Summer Schools or courses organised by other bodies.

5.3 Associations of Teachers of English

Oddly enough, these hardly exist in any influential form. Local branches of the national teachers' associations have English Sections, but they have no clear functions, and their meetings are poorly attended. A national association of teachers of modern languages was revived in 1976, with a publication "Språk og språkundervisning" which sets out to appeal to ordinary teachers.

6. Teaching Materials

A lot of money has gone into building and equipping schools, and other educational institutions in recent years. Design- and building-standards are high, and modern equipment has been provided plentifully. Norway has its fair share of language laboratories, tape-recorders, film projectors, cassette players and overhead projectors, and they are probably used as little and as much as in most other countries. School libraries, however, are rarely satisfactory. There is no general shortage of textbooks, though there are deficiencies in particular fields. Most school courses in English for the basic school are composite (study-book, work-book, teacher's handbook, tapes) though teachers complain of a lack of suitable soft-ware. Problem areas, however, include:-

a. material for weak pupils, at all levels;

b. material of practical significance, at all levels;

c. material for special vocational and career orientated courses.

6.1 Textbooks

Course-books in schools have to be approved by the Ministry of Education. They are therefore generally published in Norway (though they may be adapted versions of courses originally written for other countries - Sweden in particular; see 6.2). Supplementary material comes from a variety of sources, and UK-produced simplified readers are quite widely used. At the post-school level British and US books are regularly prescribed or recommended. Although there is some encouragement for experiment and innovation, such factors as the centralised system, national examinations at school level, ministry approval of school-books, and the conservatism of many teachers produce a general pattern of uniformity, despite the choice available.

6.2 Textbooks most widely used (not listed in order of popularity):

6.2.1 4th-6th years

Hands Up! (Ashton et al) publ. Nordli (Swedish)
This Way (Nielsen/Backe-Hansen) publ. Det Norske Samlaget (Swedish)
Say it in English (Engstrøm et al) publ. Gyldendal (Finnish)
New Hello Everybody! publ. Fabritius (Swedish)
Time for English (Hensjø et al) publ. Dreyers (Swedish)
English for You (Aslaksrud et al) (Norwegian)
Here We Are series (Edmondston) publ. Cappelen (Norwegian)

6.2.2 7th-9th years

This Way (Nielsen/Backe-Hansen) publ. Det Norske Samlaget (Swedish)
Going Up (Johansson et al) publ. Fabritius (Swedish)
English Now (Chamberlain et al) publ. Dreyers (Swedish)
On the Go (Nordby et al) publ. Gyldendal (Swedish)
Here We Are series (Edmondston) publ. Cappelen (Norwegian)

6.2.3 Upper Secondary Schools

Alternative A:

Anglo-American Reader (Sirevåg, Smidt, Sørensen) publ. Cappelen (Norwegian)

Alternative B:

Cross Currents (Aslaksrud et al) publ. Aschehoug (Norwegian)
Literary and Factual (Birgesson) publ. Universitetsfor. (Swedish)
Interesting Things (Rudal et al) publ. Fabritius (Swedish)
The Choice (Carlson et al) publ. Universitetsfor. (Swedish)
People in Action (Jegfeldt et al) (Swedish)
Contacts and Conflicts (Abrahamsen et al) publ. Fabritius (Norwegian)
Worlds of English (Lausund et al) publ. Gyldendal (Norwegian)
Active English (Lud et al) publ. Fabritius (Norwegian)

6.2.4 Special English

Material for special English is improving slowly, but in some fields old-fashioned or unsuitable books are still in use, eg.

in courses, in technical, maritime and commercial English. Among the better recent books are:-

Dear Mr Sims (Elgaaen, Naterop) publ. Aschehoug (Norwegian)
Trade and Office (" ") " " (")
Teknisk Engelsk (Bergskaug) publ. NKI (Norwegian)

6.3 Other materials

Norsk Rikskringkasting (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) has regular TV and radio programmes in English for schools, chiefly for the 13-18 age groups. Films, records and cassettes are available from the US and Canadian Embassies, the British Council, Statens Filmsentral, etc. Our impression is that films, for example, are used mainly for their background and entertainment value, and are not properly exploited as part of a teaching process.

6.4 Other production; final comments

Teachers are beginning to produce their own material, on a small scale, partly to meet the requirements of group work (very necessary in unstreamed classes), partly to fill other gaps. Many short local courses are concerned with this. But material from local projects is rarely made more widely available, even when it is the result of subsidised research.

British participation in co-publishing is in my view a real possibility. The need for a wider range of textbooks will become apparent as the upper secondary school develops along new lines and with growing vocational emphasis, and some publishers would like to look elsewhere than to Sweden for partners and sources.

Some Labour party politicians have proposed a state publishing house for schoolbooks, with an eye to improving quality and reducing costs. Parents and teachers have protested that this would limit choice, and publishers argue that, as about 50% of their earnings come from the sale of textbooks, such a system might destroy the whole commercial publishing trade.

7. Adult Education

Adult education has a long history in Norway. The Oslo Studenternes Fri Undervisning was founded over 110 years ago to encourage university students to give free teaching to working-class adults; similar organisations grew up in other university towns and elsewhere, and the SFUs are now organised in a national body, Folkeuniversitet, which offers vocational and liberal courses of all sorts, including study-groups working for university examinations, throughout the country. But adult education has also been recognised as a political weapon, and both the Labour movement, through Arbeidernes Opplysningsforbund (the Workers' Educational Association) and, on a smaller scale, the Conservative party through Aftenskolen (the evening school) offer a wide range of courses, though with something of an emphasis on public speaking, politics and economics, organisation and administration, etc. The third strand is the correspondence colleges, which grew up for egalitarian reasons at a time when educational provision was much more unevenly distributed throughout the country than it is now, and which still attract a large following.

7.1 The new (1976) Adult Education Act

This Act aims to democratise the adult education system, and to use adult education as a means of further democratising the country, by providing courses and facilities which will stimulate everyone into active participation in life-long learning. The Act will operate through subsidised

institutions such as those referred to in 7., through the kultursjefer (Directors of Culture) now being appointed by municipal and county authorities to expand and coordinate general cultural activities, including sports and athletics, in their area, and through new bodies. The most interesting of these is likely to be Norsk Fjernundervisning (Distance Education), which will operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Education in close cooperation with NRK, the correspondence colleges, local cultural committees and departments, and the adult education bodies. It will function very much along the lines of the Open University, though probably offering courses also at lower levels and in more practical fields.

7.2 English in Adult Education

Though English is now taught well at schools, there is still a need for adult classes at all levels, met by Folkeuniversitetet, the AOF, Aftenskolen, and the correspondence colleges. NRK, both by radio and and by TV, offers courses based on the Swedish "Start" material. The SFU in Oslo probably has about 2000 students a year in its English classes, attending classes from beginner level up to CPE and the RSA teachers' examination; AOF in Oslo has about the same number, but with less advanced work. The Bergen SFU offers (Jan. 1977) a total of 74 courses in English (cf 32 in French and 8 in German). The Folk University organisations and the AOF offer a good market for UK-published text books. But the success of the Swedish "Start" course suggests that the more closely coordinated adult education policy which is likely to come may favour concentration on one or two specially designed courses.

8. English outside the educational system

The voluntary bodies and correspondence schools referred to above have previously received fairly generous state subsidies, and are now being even more closely integrated into the system. Just as there are almost no private schools in Norway, so there are very few commercial language-teaching institutions. Linguaphone Institutt A/S; Inlingua Sprogskole; Norsk Språkinstitutt, and Wrede-Holm Engelskkurser are among the best-known, but none is really important in numerical terms. Nor are there many private teachers of English.

9. 9.1 British support for the teaching of English: British Council

With English as well taught as it is in Norwegian schools and other institutions, there is certainly no need for the Council to undertake direct teaching, though our support and assistance, in the ways set out below, are helpful and appreciated:-

1. We recruit and subsidise the two English consultants in the Ministry of Education (see 2.7.).

2. We recruit and help administer the 4/6 British teachers now working in basic schools through the Folk University scheme (see 5.1.). We may be able to use the same machinery for administering UK student-assistants, if the Central Bureau can reach agreement with the Ministry of Education on a scheme.

3. Representative and Asst. Rep. between them undertake some school teaching and visiting, some adult teaching, and some teaching and lecturing at colleges of education, regional colleges and universities.

4. The Oslo office has libraries of films, speech records, ELT records and cassettes, and ELT books, which are lent out to teachers all over the country.

5. The office also recruits for Council summer schools, forwards papers for many ELT visitors (individuals and study-tours) whose programmes are arranged by the Council, and publicises many summer schools and courses held by other bodies. From time to time we award bursaries or scholarships in ELT.

6. We normally have an ELT books exhibition circulating somewhere in the country; recently we took up the question of "British background" in schools, colleges of education, the universities etc., but pressures of work have prevented follow-up.

7. We provide assistance whenever possible to representatives of UK publishers with ELT lists.

9.2 British support for the teaching of English: expatriate staff

There are no lecturing or teaching posts in Norwegian institutions specifically reserved for UK nationals (see 5.1.). There are at present (1977) two chairs of English, in Trondheim and Tromsø, held by British subjects; there are eight or so UK lecturers at the universities in the English faculties, two in the regional colleges, and some five or six in the colleges of education. Quite a few British people undertake part-time teaching in the adult education organisations, and the SFU in Oslo and Bergen employ British heads for the English departments. You will find native speakers teaching in schools scattered throughout the country; most now regard themselves as settled, and most have acquired Norwegian spouses.

10. American support for the teaching of English

The US government gives no priority to ELT in Norway.

11. General statement on the educational situation

In the educational system as a whole, recent years have seen the introduction of large scale reforms at all levels; many people would say they have been too rapid and too sweeping, and that these actually working in the teaching profession have not been able to keep up with the intentions of the legislators or interpret in every day terms the instructions of the Ministry. Democracy and egalitarianism are certainly being promoted by these changes, but at the cost of confusion and friction and - most people believe - a lowering of standards. But this is a dangerous field to venture into - there is no-one whose views are not biased and subjective, and there are no absolutely rigid criteria which can be applied.

11.1 General statement on the ELT situation

What has been said above applies here. But some recent changes would command almost universal approval - English for all, more emphasis on spoken and oral skills, a progression designed for the average pupil but capable as far as possible of individual application, more up-to-date and stimulating material. On the other hand, completely unstreamed classes (including some handicapped pupils), the consequences of restricting and devaluing the examination system, and the lack of real intellectual stimulus have all created problems. One basic problem is to develop a form of teacher-training which accepts the consequences of the reforms in

English, as in other subjects. There is still too much theory, and too little emphasis on the classroom situation. Within the schools themselves, there is a lack of correlation between final goals, teaching, and evaluation - even in the respective weighting of oral and written skills. The problems of providing "individualisation" (enormous in themselves) have still to be solved in terms of group work in the classroom, and the requirements of an etiolated national examination system. Even at post-school levels one sometimes senses an air of "laissez-faire" or withdrawal, almost defeatism among staff - a feeling that, in comparison with the tight old days, things are getting out of control. On the other hand, in schools and elsewhere, there are many staff, and not all of them young, who are applying themselves with dilligence and confidence, to the task of trying to make the new system work, not simply in English, but over the whole timetable.

12. Current Research and Bibliography

12.1 Research

This lies at a fairly humble level; it includes:-

a. a number of graduate projects for the major examination in English, particularly at the University of Trondheim; on eg phonological error analysis;

b. work done by Forsøksrådet (the National Council for Innovation in Education) on questionnaires about the use of language laboratories or the choice of a third foreign language; or testing material such as the "Kaleidoscope" course;

c. programmes developed by the Oslo Teachers' Centre on English in the 3rd class, and on a model terminal examination for mixed ability classes.

The paucity of productive research is one reason that in school-English, as in school education generally, Norway is prepared to jump onto the research band-wagons of other countries, particularly Sweden.

12.2 Bibliography

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